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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3677th meeting of the Security Council, held on 3 July 1996 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Croatia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the further report of the Secretary-General of 21 June 1996 (S/1996/456) submitted pursuant to its resolution 1019 (1995) on Croatia.

"The Security Council is deeply concerned at the failure by the Croatian Government to take sufficient measures to safeguard the rights of the local Serb population and to ensure their safety and well-being. The Council is also deeply concerned at the Croatian Government's failure to promote conditions, including satisfactory procedures, facilitating the return of all Croatian Serbs who wish to do so. The Council strongly deplores such failure to act.

"The Security Council notes that the Croatian Government has begun to cooperate with international human rights mechanisms, and that it has considered various initiatives for the protection of minority rights. Nevertheless the Council underlines that the Croatian Government must undertake determined and sustained efforts to ensure respect for and protection of the rights of Croatian Serbs and to provide for their safeguarding in the legal and constitutional framework of the Republic of Croatia, including by the reactivation of the relevant articles of its Constitutional Law. The Council reminds the Croatian Government that its obligation to promote respect for and protection of such rights cannot be made conditional upon other factors, including upon political negotiations with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

"The Security Council expects the Croatian Government to take steps forthwith to comply with the demands contained in its resolution 1019 (1995) and in its statements of 8 January 1996 (S/PRST/1996/2), 23 February 1996 (S/PRST/1996/8) and 22 May 1996 (S/PRST/1996/26).

"The Security Council reiterates that all States must cooperate fully with the International Tribunal and its organs established pursuant to its resolution 827 (1993). It notes the cooperation by the Croatian Government with the International Tribunal to date, and reminds the Croatian Government of its obligation to execute arrest warrants in respect of any person in its territory indicted by the Tribunal. The Council calls upon the Croatian Government, with due respect to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to use its influence with the Bosnian Croat leadership to ensure their cooperation with the Tribunal.

"The Security Council will continue to follow this issue closely. It requests the Secretary-General to keep it regularly informed on measures undertaken by the Croatian Government in the light of this statement, and to report in any case no later than 1 September 1996."